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TEACHING TEMPERANCE IN PUBLIC
SCHOOLS.

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That the temperance problem is fraught with imminent consequences both to the present and future generations, none can deny. The educational method of dealing with the subject commands itself to all, for if it is studied from a purely scientific standpoint, then whatever advance is made will be permanent, and leave no room for an emotional reaction.

The use of narcotics has become such an overshadowing calamity that it behooves all to make diligent inquiry if perchance there may be some way of escape for our people. Not those who give way to such indulgences are to become the permanent inhabitants of our land, for such conditions do but bring about an inferiority and degeneration that eventually and surely leads to extinction. We also well know that by studying and obeying the laws of life and health, the term is lengthened and its enjoyment enhanced.

This is a subject that comes home to every man of family. All right-minded parents desire to give their children the best opportunities for the struggle of life, and even the most besotted are frequently known to make a great effort to have their children shielded from the effects of their misdoing. It is rarely that a father who uses tobacco desires his son to do the same. The young man who is to join in the struggle

presented by the author -

of a boat race, or foot-ball game, knows that it is incumbent on him to conserve all his powers and not waste them on tobacco or alcohol, and he willingly denies himself to any extent for that purpose while in training, but when it concerns the race of his life, he too often becomes prodigal of his vital energies and makes fearful havoc of what he would give thousands to be possessed of in later years, simply because he is not conscious of the injury he is doing to himself.

For this reason it is that the school years are the most important season of the child's life, the formative period, and if at that time basic truths can be inculcated, he will be more likely to avoid many errors and grow up to a more vigorous and useful manhood.

We know that every great emergency brings a man to fill the gap. In this case it was a woman, Mrs. Mary B. Hunt, who has made it her life work to forward this object, traveling over a large part of the United States in its advocacy. Associated with her as an advisory board, are some of the noblest and ablest minds in the land. Through her persevering and unselfish efforts, all but five of the States in the Union have enacted laws requiring scientific temperance to be taught all the pupils in their public schools. Canada has also listened to her voice, and enacted similar laws, and her influence has extended to several of the European governments, notably France, England and Russia.

The saloon element in the cities of New York and Brooklyn is so dominating that it was not strange that a strong opposition was developed, and in some of the daily papers, ridicule was thrown upon the work. But no sane man will maintain that there is anything preposterous about the study of physiology. On the contrary, after mastering the "three Rs" there is no more important study in the curriculum, and the reporters who attempted to ridicule this study were never more mistaken, for it is a well-meant and well-digested plan, and has the sanction and support

of some of the best and most self-sacrificing people in the land. It is as surely bound to succeed as the right is to come uppermost in the not very remote future. It is undoubtedly true that the temperance movement is to be promoted more thoroughly and rapidly by an educational course than in a prohibitive way, and it will be like "kicking against the pricks" to oppose the instruction of our children in the action of alcohol and other narcotics.

If a child can be made to understand that the purpose of the stomach is the digestion of his food, and that by its thorough digestion, impeded by no irritating or debilitating element, the vigor of the system can only be maintained, and if it is shown that the use of alcohol impairs all the functions of the stomach and predisposes to disease, he will as much hesitate to use stimulants as he would to use arsenic or any other poison.

Let any unprejudiced man who loves his race observe what a vast amount of effort is given to the production and use of alcoholic drinks; how it permeates every class of society. So, also, the use of tobacco and other narcotics. Are we, as a people or nation, benefited by them, or are they a hindrance to our progress and development? The frequent death of a victim of the cigarette habit would argue that our children could easily find a more profitable field of effort. Many of the parents may be astonished when the children come home from school and tell what they have learned about the effects of the moderate use of alcohol and tobacco, but if it be true, we have not found it out any too soon. The books that have been compiled for use in the schools have had the revision of some of the ablest physicians in our land, and they will stand the test of scientific examination. Dr. Crothers, the eminent specialist in inebriety, says, "I have spent some time on the school books mentioned, and I have not found errors or extravagant statements."

If the facts contained in these books are not adapted

to the comprehension of the children who are taught, it shows that the teacher has mistaken his calling. The question of the use of alcohol and other narcotics is one that is sure to come up for discussion more and more, and will never be quieted until it is settled rightly. If it is well for physicians to prescribe narcotics, then should the manufacture and sale be encouraged in every legitimate way. On the contrary, if their use is evil, and evil only, as some scientists claim, then all should know it, that they may avoid the pitfalls, and in no more holy ground can this knowledge be placed than in the minds of our children.

It would not be possible for the race to continue many generations longer in the free and increasing use of narcotics, for it would produce degeneration and wide-spread disaster. The light of science, which is simply increasing knowledge, will dissipate the clouds that now hang over us, and usher in the new era to a regenerated mankind. For these and many other reasons, we are satisfied that the law directing this study by the school children is a most laudable one, and should be encouraged by every right-minded person. It can be opposed only by the saloon element, and its strongest supporter, the moderate drinker, who can not too soon become aware of the error of his ways. He needs education, not prohibition. If he is past learning anything new, his children are not.

The impressions made in our childhood being the more permanent, lead up to the fact that if our children can be taught the truths about alcohol and other narcotics, the time will eventually and surely come when their daily use will be abandoned.